## MICHAEL C. BURGESS, M.D. 26TH DISTRICT. TEXAS

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February 16, 2016

The Honorable Neil Kornze Director, Bureau of Land Management U.S. Department of Interior 1849 C Street NW, Room 5665 Washington, DC 20240

Dear Director Kornze:

It is my understanding that the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) will lease a parcel of USACE land in a sale on April 20, 2016. The lessee will get the rights to extract natural gas locked in the Barnett Shale beneath a 258.9 acre collection of parcels under Lake Lewisville, Texas, located in the 26th congressional district that I represent. The auction requires that bidders are qualified oil and gas operators who intend to develop the natural gas resources contained within the leased land.

In conversations with the USACE, local officials informed my office that the USACE's policies do not allow surface drilling, and require that any drill pads be at least 1,000 feet from the water's edge when the lake is at its conservation pool. In addition, the USACE does not allow any surface drilling within 3,000 feet of critical facilities, such as the Lake Lewisville dam and spillway. I know that the parcels of land for lease comply with these requirements; however, my constituents and I are concerned about the effects that drilling will have on the structural integrity of the dam as well as the potential for contamination of our primary water supply.

Recently, the Lake Lewisville dam sustained damage as a result of the flood event in May and June of 2015, including a 161-foot slide and an area of seepage which requires further modification. While the USACE has assured me the dam is currently safe, the long-term integrity of the dam and underlying land remains a serious concern. In fact, the USACE is in the middle of a Dam Safety Modification Study to determine the long-term modifications needed to ensure its continued safe operation.

The environmental assessment provided by the BLM fails to account for dam safety concerns that might exist. Is this the only assessment that was conducted to determine that

drilling would not pose any safety or health risks to the dam or supply of drinking water? If so, I strongly encourage you to defer the sale until after the BLM and USACE can further analyze the effects of drilling on the proposed parcel for lease. If other factors were considered or studies conducted, please provide my office with a list of such factors and the analysis used to determine their impact.

The safety and health of my constituents is of the utmost importance. While I remain confident in the ability of the USACE to ensure the continued integrity of the Lake Lewisville dam, I do not feel that there has been adequate evaluation of the potential unintended consequences of this lease and subsequent drilling. Please reconsider the sale of the 10-year mineral rights lease for a section of Lake Lewisville until it can be proven beyond a doubt that there are no safety or health risks involved in the development of the natural gas reserves contained in the parcel.

Sincerely,

Michael C. Burgess, M.D. Member of Congress

MB:rh

cc: Ms. Amy Leuders, Director, Bureau of Land Management New Mexico State Office COL Calvin C. Hudson II, District Commander, Fort Worth District USACE